

PROVIDENCE HOUSING AUTHORITY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING: September 24, 2009

PHA Conference Room 100 Broad Street Providence, RI 02903

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Waldman called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Executive Director called the roll:

Present Absent

Paul F. Waldman

Dolores Cascella

Dorothy Waters

JT. Taylor

Hilary Silver

Barbara Fields John Igliozi

Nicholas Narducci (Excused)

Robert Clarkin

Six members were present, constituting a quorum.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

There were no resident comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (August 24, 2009)

Chairman Waldman called for approval of the August 24th meeting minutes. Commissioner Silver moved approval of the minutes. Commissioner Waters seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There being no opposition, Chairman Waldman declared the minutes approved.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

70th Anniversary Event

Chairman Waldman stated that the PHA will be celebrating its 70th Anniversary on Wednesday, October 28th at the Westin Hotel in Providence. It is an important event for the PHA and he urged the Commissioners to attend.

Board Retreat

Chairman Waldman stated that the 2010 Board of Commissioners Retreat will be held in March or April. He asked that the commissioners let him know about any topics they would like to see covered. Commissioner Silver stated that she would like an overview of the stimulus funds the PHA received in comparison to the amounts other housing authorities received. Commissioner Fields mentioned that information on the partnerships the PHA has formed during the last year with other organizations, such as LISC and Groundworks, would be an excellent topic.

Chairman Waldman stated that he has always wanted to hold the retreat on Martha's Vineyard, but that has not been feasible in the past. Commissioners Silver and Fields both agreed that Block Island would be a good location.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Asset Management/Capital Improvements Committee

The committee met prior to the board meeting. The report was presented by Commissioner Cascella to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

A meeting of the committee took place prior to the board meeting. Lou Tomasso, Director of Finance, presented the report to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

Resident Services Committee

The committee meeting took place prior to the board meeting. The report was presented by Commissioner Silver to be entered into the record. [See the attached report.]

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Monthly Management Report Highlights

The Executive Director stated that occupancy exceeds 99%. Collections could be better, but will most likely equal last year's 95.96% by the end of the year. The key indicators are all good. The

PHA received mixed results from the contract inspections that have just been completed, and the HUD inspections will begin October 15. He urged the Commissioners to look over the reports and speak with him at any time if they have questions.

Attention to Items in Board Packet

Each month one or more articles related to public housing are included in each Commissioner's packet in order to provide Commissioners with information on housing issues. This month's packet includes the following:

- An editorial from the Providence journal about the PHA's use of the stimulus funds.**
- An article about Chad Brown, after whom the Chad Brown development is named.**
- An article from the New York Times about the New York Housing Authority's pet policy and the ban on large dogs.**

Stimulus Bill Status Report

The Executive Director stated that the second landscape package for Roger Williams just went out to bid. There will be a lot of exterior improvements including fences, walkways, canopies at the entrances, picnic areas and a play area. [See the attached Resident Newsletter describing the work being done at the development.]

Status of Competitive CFP Grants

The Executive Director stated that the PHA submitted, well before the

deadline, 15 grant proposals to HUD for a total of \$7.3 million. These grants were submitted online in accordance with HUD's guidelines. Unfortunately, HUD is now stating that they did not receive the grant proposals despite the fact that we have evidence to prove that they were submitted correctly. Senator Reed's office has been involved in helping the PHA, but has not been able to get HUD to acknowledge the submissions. We are looking into hiring a forensic audit team to uncover more evidence to submit to HUD.

Windmill Feasibility Study Proposal

The Executive Director stated that yesterday the PHA submitted a proposal to the Rhode Island Renewable Energy Fund for a windmill feasibility study to determine where on the PHA properties we might be able to generate electricity.

Job Training

The Executive Director stated that the PHA is looking into creating some green jobs training as a collaborative effort with Providence/Cranston Jobs Training. We are also working with Greenworks to put together a landscape jobs training program.

Energy Performance Contract Status Report

The Executive Director stated that the contract is 90% complete.

Combined Presentation of Capital Improvement Activities

The Executive Director presented a slide show of photos including

both the Stimulus Fund projects and the Energy Performance Contract projects. There will also be another press conference next month to highlight the installation of the co-generation plant at Chad Brown. [See the attached printout.]

Commissioner Silver asked how the PHA selects the fence contractors. The Executive Director stated that the project is sent out to bid and that the lowest bid that fits the criteria is selected.

Youth Police Initiative

The Executive Director stated that Lt. Isabella of the Providence Police Department is involved in the Youth Police Initiative with former PHA Commissioner Paul Lewis, and that they would be meeting with the PHA next month to plan pilot mentoring programs at Hartford Park and Manton Heights. The program would most likely expand to some of the other developments as well.

RESOLUTION(S)

Resolution #4175 (under old business)

Resolution authorizing certain changes in the PHA's Admission Policy as it relates to certain individuals released from prison. Commissioner Fields moved approval with the condition that Ms. Frye and Mr. Cooper agree to attend resident meetings and board meetings when invited. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

Resolution #4179

Resolution approving the FY 2009 Capital Fund Program Grant. The PHA is receiving \$100,000 more than last year, and the work planned is part of the fifth year of the current Five Year Plan. [See the attached report]. Commissioner Cascella moved approval with Commissioner Fields seconding the motion. A vote was taken. There was no opposition by members present. Chairman Waldman declared the resolution passed.

OLD BUSINESS

Prisoner Re-Entry Program

The Executive Director introduced Bert Cooper and Robin Frye of the Providence Re-Entry Initiative, and Lt. Isabella of the Providence Police Department. Mr. Cooper stated that they should know within two to three weeks if they are receiving the grant for the proposed program.

Lt. Isabella stated that he is a District Commander in District 5 which encompasses both the Hartford Park and the Manton Heights developments. The police department is always concerned with prisoners re-entering the community and they are involved as a partner in this program because the participants are highly supervised and held accountable. They are also offered drug or alcohol treatment if needed, and job skills training. These are factors, in addition to housing, that have proven to enhance the success of

prisoner re-entry.

The Executive Director stated that the PHA knows that there are released felons living in the developments now, and that this program would provide supervision and accountability that we do not have now.

Commissioner Cascella asked how prisoners are selected for the program. The Executive Director stated that they first need to have family living in one of the developments, and that one of the goals is to re-unite those families.

Commissioner Taylor asked if these released prisoners would be able to receive services from The Family Life Center even if they do not live in that building. Ms. Frye stated that they would because the Family Life Center is one of the partners involved in the Providence Re-Entry Initiative, along with many others.

Commissioner Taylor also asked for a guarantee that sex offenders will not be allowed into the program. Ms. Frye stated that sex offenders are not part of the population that this program will serve. The Executive Director stated that sex offenders are not allowed into the housing developments per Federal law, and that this program would not change that stipulation because it is not possible to waive that law.

Commissioner Taylor stated that one of the other problems with returning prisoners is that they will go back to hanging around with the same people they were hanging around with when they initially got into trouble. Mr. Cooper explained that the accountability to and involvement of the police and the community, which are other integral parts of the program, will help to identify and alleviate this problem. Also the job training and jobs will leave the program participants with little unstructured time.

Commissioner Fields stated that a number of the affordable housing organizations in the community are now accepting returning prisoners who are involved in re-entry programs because of the many other community organizations that are already involved in providing support services.

Commissioner Waters asked that if a returning prisoner does not comply with the program, would their family living in public housing risk losing their apartment? The Executive Director stated that the PHA has always handled this type of issue on a case by case basis and would continue to do so. Through the employees of the development and the Public Housing Unit police, the PHA usually knows who is causing problems. The other family members would risk losing their housing only if they were not in compliance with their lease and PHA rules and regulations.

Commissioner Cascella asked if the grant was for only one year. Mr.

Cooper stated the grant is for one year, but with eligibility for three years, and that the only reason they would receive just one year of funding is if the program is extremely unsuccessful.

Commissioner Taylor asked if Mr. Cooper and Ms. Frye would attend resident meetings to talk with residents about the programs. They both stated that they would be happy to attend.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Waldman accepted a motion from Commissioner Taylor which was seconded by Commissioner Silver, to adjourn the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Submitted by: Approved by:

Beth Herosy Stephen J. O'Rourke

Recording Secretary Executive Director